



# Red Tail Flyer

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[www.afnews.af.mil/internal/papers/Balad.pdf](http://www.afnews.af.mil/internal/papers/Balad.pdf)

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## Airmen move from tents to H-6 dorms

New tenants applaud safety, cleanliness, dayrooms, restrooms

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

332nd AEW/PA

After weeks of rumors and speculation, the H-6 dormitories are finally open.

Airmen in grades E-1 through E-4 started moving from their tents to the H-6 dorms Nov. 18, and most should be settled in by early December.

"These dorms are another example of what the leadership here at Balad is doing to make life better," said Senior Master Sgt. Aubrey Harvey, 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron superintendent, who was one of the key players behind the move. "This move is truly one of the initial signs of our transition from an expeditionary base to main operating base."

There are a total of 13 H-6 dormitories. Ten will be used by the Air Force, eight for males and two for females, while three are for Army Soldiers assigned to Logistics Support Area Anaconda. Each facility has 16 total rooms, 15 for living quarters and one for a dayroom.

"I'm very excited about moving into the dorms," said Airman Luz Ortiz, 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron. "They are much more of a hardened facility which gives us better protection. They should also be easier to keep clean and keep the dust down."

"They're really great," said Airman 1st Class Ferdinand Flaris, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron. "The rooms are a lot bigger and now we have a nice break-room with a big screen television."



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

**Airman 1st Class Ferdinand Flaris, left, and Airman 1st Class Brandon Bailey, both of the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, put together frames for a bed while moving into the new H-6 dormitories. Airmen in grades E-1 through E-4 started moving into the dorms Nov. 18.**

Each of the 15 living quarters will house a total of four people. In most cases they will be from the same squadron, making it not only convenient, but also easier for accountability purposes.

"They seem to be a lot safer and they have air conditioning," said Airman 1st Class Pamela Bigham, 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron. "The day-room will be very nice to have too."

The new H-6 dormitories also include one amenity which is hard to find anywhere on Balad: indoor plumbing. Each dormitory has 13 sinks, 13 toilets and eight showers.

"That is the best part," said Senior Airman Tranequa Parker, 332nd ELRS. "Now we won't have to put all of our gear

on and head outside at night."

"The indoor bathrooms are going to be nice," said Senior Airman Chris Rodriguez, 332nd ECES. "Now instead of wearing all of our gear along with our shoes to the shower, we'll just have to have on our shower shoes."

The introduction of the H-6 dormitories is one of the final pieces on the move from Tuskegee Town to the H-6 housing area.

"With the trailers and quality of life facilities already completed, the move into the dorms brings us to last phase of the original H-6 community plan," said Maj. Fernando Martinez, 332nd ESVS commander. "The dorms are definitely another way our wing makes life better for team Balad."

# Open season underway for savings plan

Master Sgt. Randy L. Mitchell

AFPC Public Affairs

Civilian and military employees can sign up for, or change, their Thrift Savings Plan contribution amounts during the "open season" until Dec. 31.

"TSP is a long-term retirement savings plan, which everyone should consider," said Senior Master Sgt. Felipe Ortiz, superintendent of the Air Force Personnel Contact Center.

"It's also important to note that TSP is not limited to investing in stocks," he said. "People can choose safer government securities as well."

This open season applies only to regular TSP contributions. It does not include TSP catch-up contributions, as they are not tied to open seasons, said Janet Thomas, of AFPC's civilian benefits and entitlements.

TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute, while not having to pay taxes on earnings until they reach retirement.

"Eligible employees can take out loans and make in-service withdrawals from their TSP accounts," Ms. Thomas said. "And you can keep your account, even if you leave military or federal civilian service."

Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck "so you never have to

## 332nd AEW Finance Office

- The phone numbers for the 332nd AEW Finance office have changed. Customer service can be reached at 443-7482 and the number for the comptroller is now 443-7483.
- Check cashing is available at Bldg. 4100 Monday -Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon, and 1:30 - 6 p.m.

think about it," Sergeant Ortiz said. "That makes it easy to 'pay yourself first' while only investing what you deem appropriate."

The five TSP funds are: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund; the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

"As with any individual retirement account, the sooner you begin contributing, the better," Ms. Thomas said.

Contribution elections or changes made between Oct. 15 and Dec. 11 will take effect Dec. 12, for both military and civilian employees. Changes made on or after Dec. 12 will become effective at the beginning of the pay period following the one in which the election is made for civilians and the following month for military.

Some of the specifics of the military pro-

gram include:

- Military members can contribute up to 10 percent of their base pay, as long as the annual total of tax-deferred investment does not exceed \$14,000 for 2005. Airmen also have the ability to invest all or part of their bonuses or special pay.

- Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$41,000 in contributions.

- Servicemembers can enroll through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Web site at [www.dfas.mil/emss/](http://www.dfas.mil/emss/). They can also enroll by filling out a TSP-U-1 form at local military personnel flights, finance offices or family support centers.

- Contribution allocations can be made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine, (877) 968-3778 for employees in the 50 States, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and Canada; (504) 255-8777 for employees elsewhere, or on the TSP Web site at [www.tsp.gov/](http://www.tsp.gov/).

- For general questions, call AFPC at (800) 616-3775. Specific TSP information is available for at [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift\\_savings\\_plan.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm).

The civilian parameters differ slightly from the military program. Specific information is available for civilian employees from the Thrift Savings Plan Web site and the BEST homepage at [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/menu.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST/menu.htm).

## WORD IN THE DESERT

### What are you thankful for today?



**SMSgt. Marie Craig**  
332nd EMDG

"I'm thankful I have a loving family supporting me while I'm here in Iraq. I'm thankful to be blessed by God."



**A1C Jeangel Duro**  
332nd ECES

"I'm thankful that I get the chance to serve my country in Iraq by volunteering to be a security escort."



**CMSgt. Danny Herndon**  
332nd EMDG

"For all of the great coalition forces I have the opportunity to serve with."



**SSgt. Kerita Larkin**  
332nd AEW/FM

"The Airmen and Soldiers securing Balad and LSA Anaconda's perimeter and gates."



**1st Lt. Brian Pressler**  
Combat Camera

"I'm thankful I have a good family back in the States."

# Hope, awareness keys to suicide prevention

## Air Force offers a variety of programs to give help

Staff Sgt. Vann Miller

379th AEW/PA

Problems come unexpectedly, and things like deployments and family troubles can be big stressors for many service members. But one thing care providers want to get across is that suicide is not the right answer.

More than two dozen Airmen Air Force wide have committed suicide this year, and though leadership has implemented programs to help identify Airmen in distress, officials agree that even one loss is one too many.

There are many people who have misconceptions about suicide, according to Capt. (Dr.) Lisa Blackman, 379th Expeditionary Medical Group chief of life skills.

"Interestingly, suicide rates do not go up during the holiday season," she said. "In fact, they go down."

Though people report being subjected to an increase in stress during the holidays, people are less likely to express suicidal behavior because they generally have more

contact with others, she explained. Also, suicidal thoughts are not as uncommon or alarming as some people may believe.

"About 50 percent of people will have suicidal thoughts at one time in their life," Captain Blackman said. "Suicidal thoughts are part of being human."

She added that there is an increased concern when an individual begins to plan to go through with the idea of suicide, and this is when outside intervention is most important.

So, what are signs leaders and fellow coworkers should look for in their troops? While there is rarely a single gauge that can highlight a person at risk, officials say there are some things that members can look for that can serve as indicators. These indicators include:

- Marital or relationship problems
- Major life transitions such as separations or retirement
- Pending legal or administrative action
- Academic or other life failures
- Serious medical/psychological problems
- Financial problems
- Extreme mood swings
- Withdrawal from friends, family or social activities
- Preoccupation with death or dying

- Increased alcohol use or abuse
- Distracted at work or poor work performance

- Feelings of being trapped and hopelessness

- No reason for living or no purpose

Some of the programs offered to troops whether deployed or at their home station come from the counsel and guidance of the base chapel or the life-skills clinic.

"The objective is to help a person see that there is hope," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Charles Peters, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Chaplain. "I believe that if a person has hope there is a good chance the person will not follow through (with the suicide)."

The chaplain has the privilege of offering complete confidentiality if troops need to talk without fear of reprisal. This offers comfort to those needing to talk, said Chaplain Peters.

"Confidentiality is taken seriously within the clergy," Chaplain Peters said. "A chaplain could be relieved of duty for breaking this confidence."

Pastors at the base chapel may be bound with confidentiality and have training in counseling, but they are just part of the equation in caring for the mental state of troops experiencing depression and thoughts of suicide.

There is a certain level of confidentiality that exists in the life-skills clinic, also.

"When a person comes to us as a self-referral (not command directed by the unit commander), they can expect to have their privacy of information respected by a mental health care provider," Captain Blackman said. "The information that a healthcare provider is required to report involves imminent danger to self or others, child abuse or family violence cases, criminal activity, drug and alcohol abuse, or criminal activity."

Ultimately, treatment is the goal, whether a person visits with the base chaplain or the life-skills clinic, said Chaplain Peters.

Captain Blackman believes her job is to help people come up with a plan that helps them manage their stress and prevent depression.

"What we are going to sit down and look for is a plan to make you better," Captain Blackman said. "There is always something out there to help someone reconnect to life."

## Thanks



Air Force/Airman 1st Class Joshua Jasper

Col. Thomas Yanni, 332nd Expeditionary Mission Support Squadron commander, thanked members of KBR Saturday for their hard work and dedication to Team Balad at an appreciation party inside Town Hall. The contractors played a key role in the move from Tuskegee Town to the H-6 housing area.

# Volunteers Play Key Role In Medical Mission

## Hospital, CASF grateful for their off-duty helpers

Staff Sgt. Marc Barnes  
332nd AEW/PA

The mission of providing medical care for the wounded warriors of Operation Iraqi Freedom means long days and nights for Airmen who work in the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group here. But thanks to more than 150 volunteers who regularly give their off-duty time to lend a hand, Airmen in the group are getting some relief.

The volunteers help any way they can, from giving blood to standing guard, and according to 332nd EMDG officials, they were especially helpful during the recent Fallujah offensive, which left medical staffs at the Air Force Theater Hospital and Contingency Area Staging Facility stretched thin, according to Col. Gregory Wickern, 332nd EMDG commander.

"During high casualty times, the volunteers have contributed by freeing my medics from entry control point duties and assisting in patient movement and minor nursing care assistance," the colonel said. "Their efforts are also vital to the frequent CASF missions. The strong backs and arms of the volunteers significantly add to those of my medics."

Lt. Col. John Lopardi, commander of the CASF, agrees with Colonel Wickern. He said volunteers who work in his facility – a clinic that dou-



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Marc Barnes

**Tech. Sgt. Santo Salvatore, a Contingency Area Staging Facility volunteer, hands a soda to a patient at the CASF. Sergeant Salvatore is one of more than 150 volunteers who help out regularly at the CASF and Air Force Theater Hospital here.**

bles as a passenger terminal for patients who are being airlifted to hospitals outside Iraq – are vital to allow his staff to focus on their primary duty of providing medical care for patients.

"Volunteers play an important role assisting our patients by serving meals, assisting them to and from restrooms, talking with the warriors about their experience, and letting them know how much they are appreciated for the sacrifices they made for the

good of their fellow citizens," Colonel Lopardi said. "When we were recently faced with an overwhelming surge of patients, I called for volunteers. The positive response from the men and women of the 332nd (Air Expeditionary Wing) was overwhelming. Within ten minutes of the call, we had to turn volunteers away."

One volunteer the CASF never turns away is Tech. Sgt. Santo Salvatore, a regular at the facility. So regular in fact,

that he's become part of the CASF family, according to Master Sgt. Nancy Peck, the CASF superintendent and volunteer coordinator.

"He's willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done," she said of Sergeant Salvatore, known simply as Sal to the staff and patients at the CASF. "Whether it's loading litters, taking out trash, giving coffee to patients or anything else we need done, he's always willing to help. He's part of our family."

Sergeant Salvatore is deployed to Balad with other members of the 436th Aerial Port Squadron from Dover Air Force Base, Del. An activated reservist, his home unit is the 85th APS at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.; he was activated and became part of the 436th APS in January.

At Balad, Sergeant Salvatore works days in the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Squadron Aerial Port Flight, but he spends his evenings and one day off each week volunteering at the CASF. The 54-year-old sergeant spends 30 to 40 hours per week looking out for the "kids" he calls America's heroes. His said his motivation for giving his time is simple.

"I'm doing this for the parents," he said. "I'm a parent, and I can tell you no parent wants a call from their kid, or a call about their kid from someone, telling them their child has been injured. I'm here to do what I can as a parent, for these kids. I understand their needs. I know how to take care of them as if I were taking care of my own child in the hospital."

# Providing Eyes Over Iraq

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen  
332nd AEW/PA

Tucked away nice and neat on a parcel of land on Balad Air Base, Iraq, is the 332nd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron.

The 332nd EACS is a unit that operates around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Although they go about their business quietly, they play a huge role daily in Operation Iraqi Freedom. From supporting troops on the ground battling the enemy, to making sure aircraft have enough fuel to return to their base, they have their eyes all over the skies of Iraq.

"Our mission is to provide air power to troops on the ground," said Maj. Terry Courtney, 332nd EACS director of operations. "We also provide a picture of the airspace via data link to the Combined Air Operations Center and to the decision makers at (United States Central Command Air Forces)."

To execute their mission the unit has more than 120 Airmen working a variety of positions. They include aerospace control and warning, aerospace ground equipment, air battle managers, communications, data, intelligence, medic, radar maintenance and vehicle maintenance.

"We have a large group with a lot of different specialties, but we had a great exercise before we deployed which really helped us prepare," Maj. Courtney said. "Everything we went through there has helped us here."

As the only command and control radar in the theater, the 332nd EACS provides the eyes for the CAOC, who orchestrates all of the air campaigns in Iraq.

"If the CAOC wants to know what's going on, they come to



**Airman 1st Class Gerald Hampton, 332nd EACS, monitors the radio system in a tactical air operation vehicle.**

us," said Capt. Stuart Williamson, 332nd EACS senior director. "We execute their plans."

However, as mission requirements change almost by the minute, a lot of times the 332nd EACS has to act quickly and use an alternate means to get the objective completed.

"Sometime we have to fix (the plan) when it's not quite right," Capt. Williamson added. "We have the freedom to make changes and correct problems on the fly."

One challenge the unit faces daily is directing refuelers to aircraft in need.

"We do a lot of gas management," said Capt. James Quigley, 332nd EACS air surveillance officer. "A lot of times our tanker plans get messed up, so we have to react quickly and get them where they need to be."

Although largely based in Balad, the 332nd EACS also has detachments in Kirkuk and Tallil Air Bases. Those Airmen extend the units capabilities.

"They help us expand our recognizable air picture, which is basically our air picture com-



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

**Staff Sgt. Fred Nelson, 332nd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, repairs one of the unit's generators.**

bined with air pictures from around the theater," said Staff Sgt. Katie Long, 332nd EACS interface control technician. "We then provide it to the CAOC who can use it to make the appropriate decisions."

Making sure the 332nd EACS can provide this information without mechanical interruptions are their maintenance crews. A lot of times this group is called in at a moment's notice to get equipment up and running fast.

"People all over the AOR are dependent on our equipment," said Staff Sgt. Charles Wilson, 332nd EACS job controller, who acts as a liaison between operations and maintenance. "When something breaks it has to be fixed fast, and that's what we do."

Most of the unit is made up of Airmen from the 606th Air Control Squadron at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. However, there are a few members from the Ohio National Guard and their sister unit the 603rd ACS based at Aviano Air Base, Italy.



**Staff Sgt. Katie Long, 332nd EACS, reloads a satellite communications radio.**

"The Guardsmen bring a lot of experience with them," Major Courtney said. "They've been doing this for their whole careers and they are really a big help to some of our younger troops."

With only five air control squadrons in the Air Force, the units do not use the traditional Air Expeditionary Force rotation process when deploying. This current group of Airmen should start to redeploy back to their home stations in February.

# TUSKEGEE ALLY

*The life story of Noel Parrish, commander of Tuskegee Army Air Field*

A. Joseph Muniz

AFOSI EDET 2411

Imagine if you will, a military experiment that almost everyone in America wanted to fail. This experiment not only bothered the political realm, but also disrupted the social climate of the time. Also, imagine an individual that would almost certainly gain higher rank if he “helped” the experiment fail. When conclusions are met, then you can think of a man who set his own personal gains aside to help the Tuskegee experiment succeed. That man was Noel Parrish.

Kentucky-born Noel F. Parrish graduated from Cullman High School in Alabama. At the time, most of the Deep South had been heavily segregated due to the 1892 Supreme Court ruling of Plessy vs. Ferguson, which established a “separate but equal” ruling between the races. After high school, Parrish graduated from Rice Institute (later Rice University) in Texas in 1928. Two years later, he enlisted in the Army. He served with the 11th Cavalry in California for a year before he was appointed as a flying cadet. By 1938, he would find himself as a flying instructor at Randolph Field, and in 1941 he assumed the position of director of training at Tuskegee Army Air Field.

As director of training, Parrish was well liked and trusted. When he was promoted to the position of base commander, it was well received by the Tuskegee Airmen. Most of the surviving Tuskegee Airmen remember then-Colonel Parrish established higher standards of training and that most of it was demanding them to do their best. They also attested to the fact that if it had not been for those same standards, then they would not have gotten their wings. Unlike his predecessor, Parrish provided the same flight training as other bases, viewing the Tuskegee Airmen truly as Army “Assets” instead of an “Experiment”. It was Colonel Parrish himself that traveled to the Pentagon to demand that the War Department send the 99th Fighter Squadron and the rest of the 332d Fighter Group to Europe to do their part to win the war.

At the conclusion of the war, the military



Courtesy photo

**Brig. Gen. Noel F. Parrish served as the as the base commander of Tuskegee Army Air Field, Ala., and pushed the War Department to include the famed Tuskegee Airmen in World War II.**

had a drastic downsizing of all forces which included all flying programs. Tuskegee Army Air Field was scheduled for closure which Colonel Parrish had to oversee. All trainees were permitted to finish training while other key personnel were reassigned to Col. Benjamin O. Davis at Godwin Field, Ky. Closing a military base was taxing because not only did Parrish have to reassign personnel, but had to reassign Army assets and have buildings removed.

Colonel Parrish moved on to other duties in the Air Force to include Assistant to Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, NATO and Headquarters,

USAF. Perhaps his greatest contribution was his thesis on the integration of the U.S. Armed Forces which helped President Harry S. Truman sign Executive Order #9981. This order not only integrated the Air Force, but all services. When Noel Parrish retired in 1964, he had obtained the rank of Brigadier General, but his greatest gift was helping the services realize that integration would strengthen the country's military force. In 2001, fourteen years after his passing, General Parrish was inducted into the Kentucky Aviation Hall of Fame for his contribution to the betterment of the Armed Forces.

# hings to be thankful for ...

**Capt. Mark Restad**

*332nd ECONS chief*

I would expect that most people reading this article have just spent their Thanksgiving here at Balad Air Base, Iraq, away from your homes and loved ones. No doubt you understand the importance of what we are doing here, and how you contribute to this mission. However, given the choice, this is probably not the place you would prefer to spend your Thanksgiving.

We are fortunate to be citizens of a country that is strong, stable, and free. As Americans, there is so much for us to be thankful for that I could write several pages on this subject and just barely scratch the surface. However, one way that we are reminded about how much we have is to consider those who do not have many of the things we take for granted. In particular, I would like to talk about the many ordinary Iraqis who are working to make their country a better place.

In my position as chief of contracting I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many Iraqi contractors. I've seen many people dedicated to doing a good job, despite the obstacles. And there are plenty of obstacles. Most people here at Balad probably don't realize what the contractors have to go through to get to their jobs; jobs which contribute significantly to the support of this base. When contractors come here to work at Balad they have to pass through security



Army/Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson

at the North Gate. It typically takes one to two hours for them to go through the line, get searched, sign in, and finally get through. They go through the same process when they leave as well. While these security measures are certainly understandable in this environment, it makes a rush hour commute back in the States seem rather easy.

I should point out that all of this happens once they actually get to Balad. They, of course, have to commute here, and that can be very hazardous. Frequently they are subject to threats, harassment, and intimidation for coming to work with the Americans. Some of them have had relatives kidnapped and held for ransom. Since I've been here, a number of contractors have even been killed while coming to Balad.

To bring this point home, I want to tell you about one contractor I know very well here at Balad. For his own protection, I won't use his name. However, his experience has really demonstrated to me what the Iraqis go through. Several weeks ago

his child was kidnapped. Presumably he was targeted because he works with Americans. Certainly this is one of the most trying experiences for any parent to go through.

We can be thankful that we live in a country where people do not routinely worry about their safety simply for going to work. We also do not have to worry about us or our families being targeted by our fellow citizens simply because of the job we have or the support we lend for a particular cause. We can express our views freely and act on them at the voting booth rather than through violence and retribution against each other.

We have just recently gone through an important election. No matter which candidate you may have supported, you can be thankful that we have had these peaceful elections for over two centuries, where our citizens have chosen who our leaders will be. As you may have heard, Iraqi elections are now scheduled for January 30. Iraqis will soon be participating in this process for the first time; a process we

may sometimes take for granted. We should consider this while performing our day to day duties and realize that we are doing our part to bring about these elections. We can hope that this will be the foundation of a positive future and way of life for the Iraqi people.

And what about the contractor whose child was kidnapped? Well, he and his family had to endure six days of worry and negotiations with the kidnappers. In the end he had to pay a hefty ransom to get her back. However, their child was safely returned a little while ago, much to his relief. Coincidentally, the week previous to Thanksgiving many Iraqi Muslims celebrated Eid Al-Fitr. This is a three day holiday which celebrates the end of Ramadan and the breaking of their daily fast. While unrelated to our Thanksgiving, one thing it has in common is that it is an important time for families to get together and share big meals. He got his daughter back in time for them to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr together. They were very thankful that they were able to do this.

The story doesn't end there. Once his daughter was returned he was back to work doing his part to help us to stabilize and rebuild this country. It takes a brave and determined person to go through something like that and still be committed to helping us bring peace to this troubled land.

As for us, we are thankful that there are people like him.

# Gen. Jumper calls AEFs 'successful'

Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez

*Air Force Print News*

WASHINGTON – Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper told House Armed Services Committee members that while reconstitution of air expeditionary forces is not moving as quickly as expected, the concept is battle-proven.

General Jumper testified before the House of Representatives Nov. 17 on the current state of the service.

"Last February, when I sat in front of this committee, we talked about the reconstitution of our air expeditionary forces and the fact that we were in the midst of experimenting to see if the AEF concept actually worked," General Jumper told more than 30 legislators. "I can report our ability to pull eight of our 10 AEFs forward to engage in major combat operations, and then reset those, has been a success."

General Jumper also explained to legislators how the Air Force recently increased the AEF deployment length.

"We have (extended) our deployment time from 90 to 120 days," he said. "We have about 80 percent of our force on 120-day rotation. About 20 percent of the high-demand forces are on rotations (lasting) up to one year."

The general told committee members that while visiting deployed Airmen and troops of their sister services, he picked up on a common theme.

"I have been to Iraq and visited the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines over there," General Jumper said. "The singular message I bring back from them is 'let's not quit

until we are done.' They believe that. They are dedicated to the mission they are engaged in over there and want to see it through."

Committee members asked about retention and recruiting numbers. General Jumper said the Air Force has been very successful.

"We are enjoying excellent results in our recruiting and retention," General Jumper said. "As a matter of fact, one of the problems is that our end strength is more than it should be. We will spend the next year working down to our authorized end strength of 360,000."

Efforts to reduce the total Air Force to the authorized end strength are part of the service's force-shaping initiative. Force shaping includes reduction through retirement or separation, but it also involves moving Airmen from career fields with overages into career fields with shortages.

"In order to keep from breaking faith with those who want to stay in the Air Force, we are going to take most of this from our initial recruiting," General Jumper said. "We have a plan to do that; I think it is going to work. I don't want to kick out any Airmen who want to stay."

Finally, General Jumper commented on the departure of Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche. Secretary Roche announced his resignation Nov. 16.

"I must say I am very proud to have served with Dr. Roche during his tenure," General Jumper said. "I have never seen anyone who cared more about the nation's Airmen than Dr. Roche."

In the corner pocket ...



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Marc Barnes

**Staff Sgt. Wayne Sutherland, 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron air traffic controller, lines up his shot on one of the pool tables at the Air Force recreation center here. Sergeant Sutherland is deployed from Altus Air Force Base, Okla.**

## DoD launches 'America Supports You' to showcase troops support

Donna Miles

*American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON – Department of Defense officials launched a new program Nov. 19 to showcase America's support for the men and women of the armed forces and the myriad ways people are expressing that support.

"America Supports You" is designed to gather information about the many activities and programs Americans have launched to show support for the troops and to ensure they and their families know about it, according to DoD officials.

The program encourages people to visit a Web site and share details about projects or activities they are conducting to show support for American troops. By doing so, they can sign up to receive a military-style dog tag with the "America Supports You" logo that provides a tangible symbol of their support.

For more information on the America Supports You program, visit [www.defendamerica.mil](http://www.defendamerica.mil) or [www.americasupportsyou.mil](http://www.americasupportsyou.mil).

## Defense briefs —

### Bush Thanks Troops and Families

WASHINGTON — President Bush turned the nation's thoughts to servicemembers and their families during a pre-Thanksgiving White House event Nov. 17.

"During this holiday season," the president said, "we think especially of our men and women of the armed forces, many of whom are spending Thanksgiving far from home.

"America is proud of our military. We're proud of our military families, and we give them our thanks every day of the year."

Bush recalled his surprise 2003 Thanksgiving Day visit with troops serving in Iraq's Baghdad area. That day, he told the stunned audience they were on duty in Iraq "so that we don't have to face them in our own country."

At the White House this year, he noted that "those men and women, like all who wear our nation's uniform, have volunteered to serve," Bush said. "Through their courage and skill and sacrifice they are keeping our country safe and free."

The president reminded guests Nov. 17 that "we are a nation founded by men and women who deeply felt their dependence on God and always gave Him thanks and praise."

"As we prepare for Thanksgiving in 2004, we have much to be thankful for: our families, our friends, our beautiful country, and the freedom granted to each one of us by the Almighty."

The president hosted the annual White House event in honor of the national Thanksgiving turkey. In keeping with custom, Bush granted this year's bird, Biscuits, a presidential pardon, meaning that it was "not going to end up on the table." And in an unusual twist, the president included a second turkey, Gravy, in the pardon.

### Air Force working to fix pay issues

WASHINGTON — In testimony before Congress on Nov. 18, the Air Force's finance director said there are issues with the service's pay system, but officials are tackling them.

Michael Montelongo, assistant secretary of the Air Force for financial management, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Air Force officials are using an approach similar to the Army's to deal with pay issues involving reservists and guardsmen.

"(We are) bringing together the different (areas) involved in the total-pay process," Mr. Montelongo said. "We set up a (council) where we ... work on three areas: integrating the people involved in the process, making sure our processes are as integrated as possible and doing some of the near-term fixes in our personnel (and) pay systems so that we mitigate ... pay problems."

These areas include the Air Force's personnel and finance communities and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the Department of Defense-level agency responsible for paying every American servicemember.

"While we still have some issues, we are managing those, and they are not at the alarm level," Mr. Montelongo said. Also key is a push to accelerate implementation of the Defense Integrated Military Human-Resource System, he said.

It is intended to replace and combine older personnel and pay computer systems in the DOD and in the component services. It will eventually replace DFAS's Defense Joint Military Pay System and the Air Force's Military Personnel Data System.

## Meet your neighbor



### Senior Airman Chris Rodriguez

Home station: Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

Unit: 332nd ECES

Family: Parents, Charlie and Marlene Rodriguez; three older brothers who have all served in the Navy and a younger brother and sister.

Hobbies: Golf, watching television, driving and consuming frosty adult beverages

How do you contribute to the mission? Ensuring the base and its personnel are ready for major incidents, such as natural disasters, nuclear, biological and chemical attacks.

What is your favorite aspect of this deployment? Getting to work with new people and finding out how they deal with the issues associated with our job.

Besides your family, what do you miss back home? The little things like being able to go to a restaurant at midnight, washing my car and using a cell phone.

## AWAY FOR THE HOLIDAYS?



Read greetings from your friends and family back home posted on Iraq Newslink's Holiday Greetings page at ...

[www.afnews.af.mil/iraq/greetings.htm](http://www.afnews.af.mil/iraq/greetings.htm)

## Air Force Religious Schedule

### Protestant

#### Sundays:

8 a.m. • Religious Education – H-6 Chapel  
9 a.m. • Contemporary Worship – H-6 Chapel  
10:30 a.m. • Traditional – Hospital  
2 p.m. • Bible Study – Hospital  
3 p.m. • Devotional – CSAR Theatre  
5:30 p.m. • Inspirational Worship – T-Town Chapel

#### Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays:

8:45 a.m. • Purpose Driven Life Study – CASF

#### Daily:

8:30 p.m. • Band of Brothers – H-6 Chapel  
9 p.m. • Prayer – H-6 Chapel

### Islamic

#### Fridays:

1:30 p.m. • Prayer – Provider Chapel

### Church of Christ

#### Sundays:

11 a.m. • Worship – 1/142nd Chapel Tent

### Lutheran

#### Sundays:

8:30 a.m. • Cherokee Chapel  
2 p.m. • 185th Task Force Tent

### Roman Catholic

#### Sundays:

10:30 a.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel

#### Wednesdays:

9:30 a.m. • Mass – CASF

#### Fridays:

6 p.m. • Reconciliation – Hospital  
6:30 p.m. • Mass – Hospital

### Latter Day Saints

#### Sundays:

7 p.m. • Sacraments – H-6 Chapel  
8 p.m. • Sunday School – H-6 Chapel

#### Thursdays:

7 p.m. • Study Group – H-6 Chapel

### Jewish

#### Fridays:

6:30 p.m. • Prayer – Eden Chapel

### Orthodox

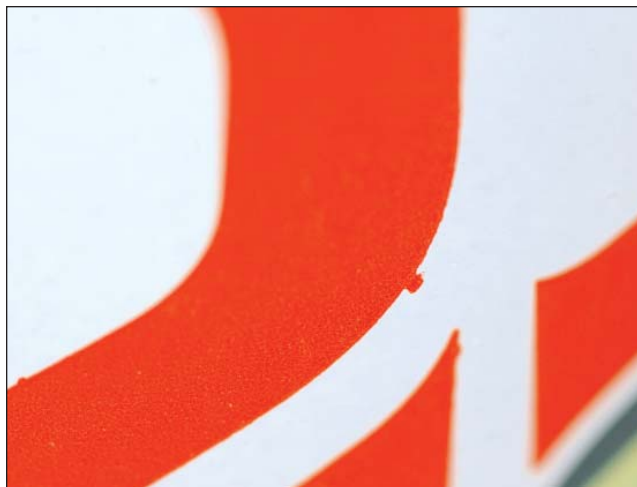
#### Sundays:

11 a.m. • Divine Liturgy – 185th Task Force Tent

#### Saturdays:

7 p.m. • Vespers – 185th Task Force Tent

## Know what this is?

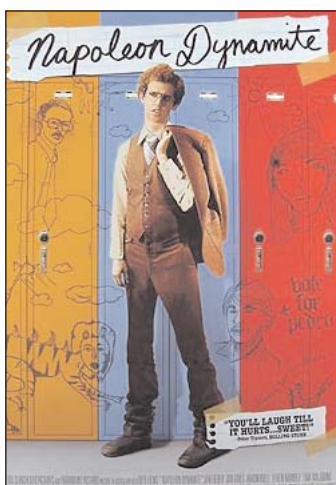


Air Force/Staff Sgt. Marc Barnes

If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at [redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil](mailto:redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil). The first person with the correct answer wins a \$10 gift certificate courtesy of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. Last week's photo of a Meal-Ready-to-Eat heater went unidentified, so another \$5 carried over to this week.



# Sustainer Movie Schedule



Schedule is subject to change

### Today

3 p.m. - Cellular  
6 p.m. - Ladder 49  
9 p.m. - Cellular

### Saturday

3 p.m. - Napoleon Dynamite  
6 p.m. - After the Sunset  
9 p.m. - Resident Evil

### Sunday

3 p.m. - Polar

### Express

6 p.m. - Mr. 3000  
9 p.m. - Cellular

### Monday

3 p.m. - The Forgotten  
6 p.m. - Resident Evil  
9 p.m. - Bourne Supremacy

### Tuesday

3 p.m. - Cellular  
6 p.m. - Forgotten

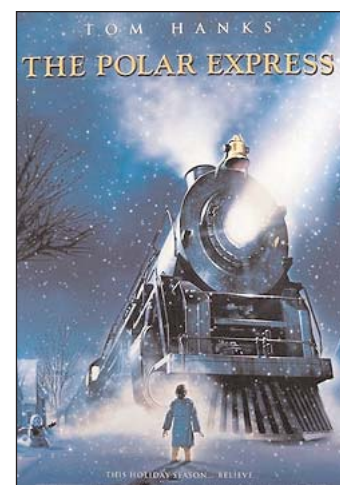
9 p.m. - Mr. 3000

### Wednesday

3 p.m. - Paparazzi  
6 p.m. - Napoleon Dynamite  
9 p.m. - The Forgotten

### Thursday

3 p.m. - King Arthur  
6 p.m. - Secret Window  
9 p.m. - Ladder 49



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Red Tail Flyer Editor

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All photos are Air Force photos, unless otherwise indicated.

The deadline for all editorial submissions is 5 p.m. the Tuesday prior to the date of publication.